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Pathways of agroforestry systems in Mediterranean protected landscapes: a social-ecological perspective

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While global change is challenging our models of development, integrated approaches such as agroecology, multifunctional forest management or integrated conservation are ways to promote land-sharing. Among the diversity of agro-ecological practices that intend to reach both food production and environmental issues, agroforestry systems (AFS) have the specificity to integrate woody vegetation, crops and/or livestock on the same area of land. Here we identified the different types of AFS and social-ecological processes that explain their dynamics in two Mediterranean protected areas: Ventoux biosphere reserve and Verdon regional nature park. These two territories are characterized by a typical Mediterranean landscape gradient, from areas impacted by urbanization and industrialization of agriculture, to abandoned marginal lands. We conducted 50 semi-directive interviews with stakeholders concerned by AFS. We focused on: i) the main AFS present in the protected areas as well as their dynamics and; ii) the stakeholders, institutional arrangements and policies involved for each type of AFS. We identified two contrasted but inter-connected dynamics along the landscape gradient: i) in intensely used agricultural landscapes, AFS are promoted by environmental stakeholders to support more complex landscapes and soil, water and biodiversity preservation; and ii) in marginal mountainous areas, the main AFS, silvopasture, is affected by multiple issues such as fire prevention, forestry production and maintenance of open environments. In both cases, ongoing social-ecological changes (wolf resettlement, increased droughts, political changes...) call into question the arrangements implemented by stakeholders, inducing new coordination challenges.